

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

INFO CINCSO

SECDEF

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 138417

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MASS, GT, UK, BH

SUBJECT: GUATEMALAN PURCHASE OF C-47'S

REFERENCE: GUATEMALA 2906

1. WE APPRECIATE EMBASSY REPORT ON GROWING STRAIN
IN RELATIONS WITH MOD AND MILITARY HIERARCHY AS WELL AS
RECOMMENDATION AS TO WHAT USG MIGHT DO WITH RESPECT TO
C-47 CASE TO AVOID INCREASING THAT STRAIN. WE BELIEVE,
HOWEVER, THAT WAY IN WHICH GUATEMALANS HAVE HANDLED RECENT
SECURITY ASSISTANCE ISSUES, AND PARTICULARLY C-47 CASE,
RAISES FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS REGARDING MUTUALITY OF
USG-GOG PERCEPTIONS RE MILITARY ASSISTANCE.

2. GUATEMALAN MILITARY ATTACHE FUENTES, DURING CALL ON
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DEPTOFF JUNE 9, STATED THAT GOG DECISION TO BUY ARAVA
WAS MADE QUOTE SIX MONTHS AGO UNQUOTE. ALTHOUGH
DESCRIBING PURCHASE AS QUOTE COMPLETELY SEPARATE UNQUOTE
FROM C-47 PROGRAM, HE SAID THAT WHEN INFORMED OF GOG

DECISION HE HAD ASKED WHETHER TO PURSUE PEACE MAYA PLAN
AND HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED TO GO AHEAD.

3. THIS HEIGHTENS OUR CONCERN THAT GOG HAS ATTEMPTED
TO MISLEAD US, INVOLVING AMBASSADOR PERSONALLY IN THAT

ATTEMPT, AND ALSO HAS -- EITHER INTENTIONALLY OR AT LEAST
KNOWINGLY -- PUT US IN MIDDLE BETWEEN THEM AND GREAT
BRITAIN. HMG COULD NOT FAIL TO NOTICE OUR ROLE IN
CONSIDERABLE EXPANSION OF GAF'S PARATROOP LIFT CAPABILITY
(WHETHER OR NOT GOG PRESENTLY HAS ANY PLANS TO USE IT)
AND, INDEED, HMG HAS NOTICED IT AND RAISED QUESTION WITH
US.

4. UK WAS ALREADY APPREHENSIVE ABOUT GOG PLANNED
ACQUISITION OF C-47'S AND PATROL BOATS, AND UK AMBASSADOR
RAMSBOTHOM LAST WEEK EXPRESSED OFFICIAL CONCERN OVER
US ARMS POLICY VIS-A-VIS GUATEMALA. HE ADVISED THAT
UK EMBASSY WOULD DEVELOP THIS SUBJECT IN FOLLOW-UP VISIT
WITH ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS. WE ANTICIPATE THAT UK
CONCERN AND APPREHENSIONS WILL BECOME MORE PRONOUNCED
WHEN WE INFORM THEM OF GOG PURCHASE OF ARAVA, WHICH WE
FEEL OBLIGED TO DO. IT IS OUR HOPE THAT UK WILL ASK
ONLY TO BE KEPT INFORMED AND WILL STOP SHORT OF REQUESTING
CANCELLATION OF C-47 DEAL AND FMS CREDITS FOR PATROL
BOATS.

5. ALTHOUGH WE DO NOT HAVE HERE ALL PEACE MAYA DOCUMENTS,
THAT PLAN SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN PREMISED ON AGREED JOINT
PLAN FOR INCREASING GAF AIRLIFT CAPABILITY. INITIAL
OBJECTIVE WAS 13-14 AIRCRAFT IN-COUNTRY AND 3 AVAIL-
ABLE IN US AS ATTRITION TOOK ITS TOLL. SUBSEQUENT
AGREEMENT TO SWAP FIVE OLDEST FOR NEWER VERSIONS DID
NOT CHANGE IN-COUNTRY TOTAL. WHEN GUATEMALANS DECIDED
SOME MONTHS AGO TO ACQUIRE ARAVA THEY MUST HAVE UNDER-
STOOD THAT THEIR DECISION UPSET BASIS UPON WHICH PEACE
MAYA DEVELOPED. THEIR FAILURE TO COMMENT ON THIS
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PURCHASE TO US, PARTICULARLY DURING MARCH 13 MEETING
WITH AMBASSADOR, AT WHICH TIME THEY ASKED TO HAVE ALL
C-47'S DELIVERED TO GUATEMALA AND TO RETAIN FIVE OLD
ONES STRONGLY SUGGESTS DELIBERATE EFFORT TO MISLEAD US
INTO BELIEVING THAT UNDERSTANDING REGARDING SIZE OF
TRANSPORT FLEET REMAINED UNCHANGED.

6. HOWEVER, EVEN IF PEACE MAYA WAS NOTHING MORE THAN
NAME FOR AGREED PROCUREMENT OPERATION, WITHOUT REGARD
TO DEFINING OPTIMAL NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT, GOG CERTAINLY
KNOWS THAT THE UP-GRADING OF ITS POTENTIAL THREAT AGAINST
BELIZE, IN THIS MAGNITUDE, AND WITH OUR ACTIVE PARTICI-
PATION, WAS BOUND TO GET BRITISH INVOLVED, AS HAS

HAPPENED. PARTICULARLY NOW WITH NEGOTIATIONS ON BELIZE UNDERWAY, AND ESPECIALLY ADDING THE ARAVA'S, BRITISH ARE BOUND TO WONDER WHAT KIND OF GAME GOG IS PLAYING AND WHAT OUR ROLE IS.

7. WE WISH TO KEEP IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT INVOLVED IN ABSTRACT TERMS IS NOT ISSUE. GOG EMPHATICALLY DOES NOT NEED OUR AGREEMENT TO INCREASE ITS AIRLIFT CAPACITY TO ANY SIZE IT WANTS. HOWEVER, WHEN IT ASKS FOR AND RECEIVES OUR COOPERATION IN THIS EFFORT, IT DOES, AS RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT, ACQUIRE CERTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES TOWARDS US. WE ARE DISTURBED AND PERPLEXED BY GOG HANDLING OF PURCHASE; BECAUSE IT APPEARS TO IMPLY THAT MOD PERCEIVES THAT SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM IS MORE IMPORTANT TO USG THAN TO GOG. CONTRIBUTING TO OUR CONCERN, OF COURSE, ARE THE TWO CASES EARLIER THIS YEAR IN WHICH GOG TOOK DECISIONS IMPACTING ON SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM WITHOUT PRIOR CONSULTATION. WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THIS TREND.

8. WE ANTICIPATE THAT GUATEMALAN MILITARY WILL CONTINUE TO PUSH C-47 DEAL AND WILL FIND FAULT WITH OUR PERFORMANCE IN OTHER, UNRELATED TRANSACTIONS. IN PART, AT LEAST, WE SEE THIS AS A DEFENSIVE REFLEX ANTICIPATING OUR REACTION WHEN - INEVITABLY - WE DISCOVERED THEIR ATTEMPT TO MISLEAD US. WE REALIZE THAT THIS REACTION OF THEIRS CAN HAVE OBJECTIVE
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RAMIFICATIONS WITH WHICH WE MUST DEAL. NONETHELESS, WE PREFER NOT TO APPROACH GOG AS OUTLINED REFTEL UNTIL WE HAVE SOME BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF WHY GOG DECIDED TO PURCHASE ARAVA WITHOUT INFORMING US, WHAT GOG FINAL INTENTIONS ARE WITH RESPECT TO DEVELOPMENT AND UTILIZATION OF LIGHT AIR TRANSPORTS, AND WHAT OUR OPTIONS ARE WITH RESPECT TO IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH GUATEMALAN MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT.

9. WE ARE CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF ASKING AMBASSADOR TO APPROACH RUBIO OR MOLINA TO SPELL OUT OUR CONCERNS OVER SEVERAL IMPLICATIONS OF USG PARTICIPATION IN EXPANSION OF GAF AIRLIFT CAPACITY TO SIZE CONTENDED. AMBASSADOR WOULD POINT OUT THAT ORIGINAL AGREEMENT TO SUPPLY C-47'S WAS BASED ON MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE GOG WANTED TO GO IN DEVELOPMENT OF LIGHT TRANSPORT FLEET AND USG DECISION THAT KIND OF ASSISTANCE FORESEEN WAS DEFENSIBLE TO CONGRESS AND EXPLAINABLE UK. GOG DECISION TO PURCHASE ARAVA HAS CHANGED ALL OF THAT, AND WE ARE NOW BACK TO WHERE WE WERE BEFORE 1974 AGREEMENT. UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES AND RATHER THAN SIMPLY CANCELLING C-47

DEAL, AMBASSADOR MIGHT SUGGEST, IT WOULD BE USEFUL FOR MOD AND MILGP TO REVIEW AGAIN GAF MODERNIZATION PLANS

AND GOALS SO WE CAN DETERMINE WHETHER IT WOULD BE FEASIBLE AND DEFENSIBLE FOR USG TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS MODERNIZATION. HOPEFULLY, REVIEW PROCESS WOULD HELP TO DEVELOP FULLER UNDERSTANDING OF GOG PERCEPTIONS OF PRESENT ROLE OF SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM AND TO RE-ESTABLISH BASIS OF MUTUAL TRUST AND CONFIDENCE WITH RESPECT TO GUATEMALAN MILITARY DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND GOALS.

10. REQUEST EMBASSY COMMENTS. KISSINGER

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